



# The Goat Trail

## Lower Skolai Lake-Chitistone Pass-Glacier Creek

**Access:** From Gulkana, Chitina or McCarthy via local air-taxi service to Lower Skolai Lake Airstrip or Glacier Creek Airstrip.

**Distance:** Approximately 25 miles

**Time:** 5-8 days

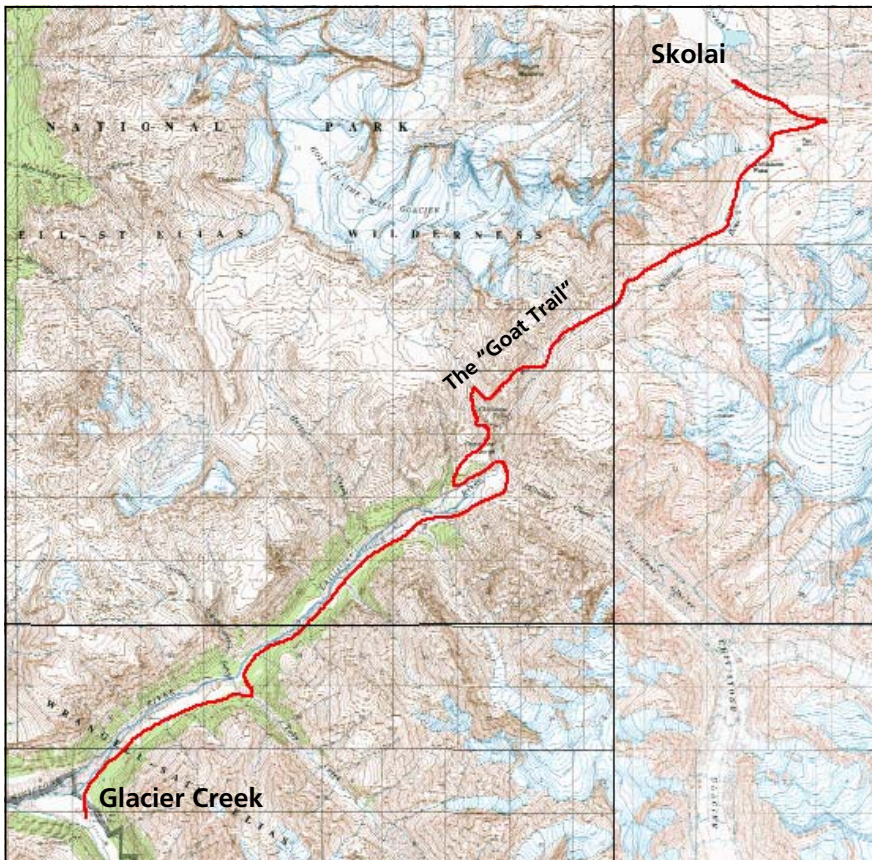
**Difficulty:** Difficult

**Maps:** USGS Maps-McCarthy (B-4), (C-4), (C-3) 1:62,360; McCarthy 1:250,000

**Elevations:** From 4500 ft. at Lower Skolai Lake to 5800 Ft at Chitistone Pass to 2340 ft. at Glacier Creek.

**Maps:** USGS Maps-McCarthy (B-4), (C-4), (C-3) 1:62,360; McCarthy 1:250,000

**Highlights:** Spectacular vistas, wildlife, wilderness, glaciers, waterfalls, alpine flowers



### Note:

- Proper food storage is required. Bear Resistant Food Containers are available from park visitor centers
- This is a route with a visible historic trail in places. The trail is NOT maintained.

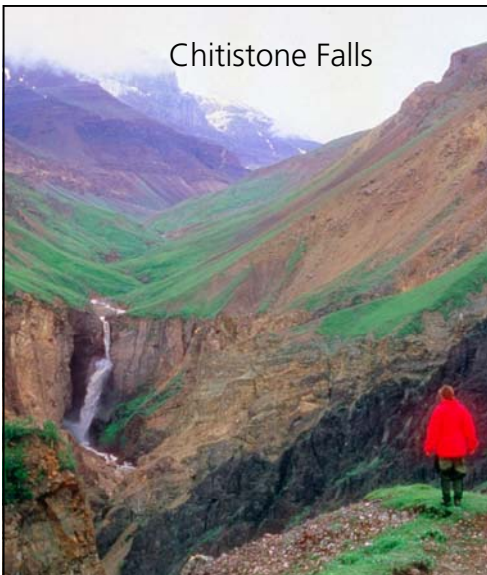






### Route:

From Lower Skolai Lake airstrip it is a 1300 ft. climb to Chitistone Pass. From the east end of the airstrip, hike southeast towards the pass, staying between the brush and the hillside to your right. You will cross several streams. After approximately 2 miles you will cross a small stream below a waterfall coming off the pass.



Chitistone Falls

After crossing the stream, hike another few hundred yards before beginning to climb up to the pass. There is no discernible trail until you reach the first plateau above. From the pass the trail goes along the northwest side of the lake. Camping on the margin of the large lake at Chitistone Pass is not recommended to avoid disturbing fragile vegetation and breeding bird populations. The route goes through a lateral moraine. The trail leads down to a group of large boulders, small stream, and the Chitistone River .

The route follows the river. After crossing a clear stream, the trail begins to switchback up a grassy hillside. The trail traverses the scree slopes before cresting about 5000 ft above Chitistone Falls. Keep climbing up to the base of the most prominent cliff band in the light yellow colored rock (limestone) above the dark colored rock (greenstone). Do not traverse in the greenstone. Many people are traversing too low and are walking into very dangerous areas. The safer path up high (depicted by the white line

in the yellowish rock) may be covered with rockfall and not visible. Be extremely careful not to follow one of the many sheep trails leading through the treacherous bluffs.



Stay in the limestone



Watch for treacherous bluffs





Follow the trail depicted on the USGS map to cross the creek and get around a narrow gorge and waterfall. After the creek the trail leads down to a beautiful, green bench above Chitistone Gorge and disappears along the bench. The route stays along the right side of this bench near the hillside. When you reach the southwest end of the bench, the trail heads down through alders. The trail will end at a gravel outwash plain from a small stream. Walk down the stream to the Chitistone River. Walk up the river to the confluence between the Chitistone River and the Chitistone Glacier tributary. Cross each tributary separately. People have died in the Chitistone River trying to cross the river below the confluence. These crossings may be time consuming. Early morning hours are best. You may have to hike upstream to find a safe crossing. Do NOT attempt to cross after heavy precipitation.

Walk down river on the southern shoreline. There are two significant creek crossings prior to Toby Creek. If the water in Toby Creek is high continue up river to a suitable crossing. Continue following the river down stream or follow a game trail in the vegetation. There isn't any fresh water between Toby Creek and Glacier Creek. The airstrip at Glacier Creek is up the creek about a half mile.

#### Potential Hazards: \_\_\_\_\_

- The Chitistone River can be extremely hazardous to cross. Use caution and good judgment if you attempt the crossing. Do not cross below the confluence.
- There is significant vertical exposure along this route.

